

ON MISSION TO SHARE JESUS

SERMON

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WHAT MAKES US GO

ROMANS 1:14-16

The main business of the church of our Lord is evangelism. That is—getting the message of the good news out. The word *evangel* means *good news*. It is taken directly from the Greek New Testament. The word for *gospel* in the Greek New Testament is *euaggelion*, from which we get the word *evangel*. The *good news* is the *evangel*. Evangelism is the work of taking that good news about the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ to those who have never been saved so they will repent of their sins and will turn by faith to the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. That is the good news. That is the main business of the church. That is what we are all about. That's why we are here.

My reason for talking about this is to refocus us as a congregation of believers on what our main business is. My purpose has been to get us prepared to go.

When you read the New Testament, everywhere you turn you find that people were on the go. Jesus said to the disciples in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19, NASB), "Go therefore and make disciples." In Acts 8:26 (KJV), the Lord said to Philip, "Arise and go." And Philip arose, and went, and witnessed to the Ethiopian eunuch. He was on the go.

I remember the story in Mark 5 about Legion who was healed by the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "Go home to thy friends and tell" (Mark 5:19, KJV). Go! Tell! Everywhere we turn, we are confronted with our Lord's command to go.

My life verse is Psalm 126:6 (KJV) which says, "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Every where we turn in the Bible, we are met with the command of our Lord to go as witnesses, to go as evangelists.

The Bible says we are to do the work of an evangelist. Not that all of us are evangelists by calling in the sense that we are full-time in the work of evangelism. However, we are all to do the work of the evangelist in that we are to go and tell the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This morning I want to raise this question for you. *What will make us go?* Now that we know that we ought to go, what is it that will cause us to go? What is it that will really motivate you and me to really do what the Lord says and to get us on the go for Jesus?

I turned to the life of a man named the Apostle Paul. We read about him a great deal in the New Testament. He wrote at least half of the books in our New Testament. He was perhaps the greatest Christian who ever lived. We know that Paul was a great soulwinner. I think the Lord Jesus Christ was, of course, the greatest soulwinner. None could win people like Jesus did. He won the woman at the well. He won Nicodemus. Jesus Christ is the great soulwinner, our great example. However, I think you would agree with me that Paul, next to the Lord, was the greatest soulwinner who ever lived. What made Paul go? What caused Paul to be on fire to tell the good news?

When you read about his life, you notice that there is a burning passion in this man. When you read about Paul, you will see that here is a man who is driven to go and tell people about the good news. In fact, the context of Romans 1 is the context of Paul going to Rome. In verse 1, he talks about having a prosperous journey. In Romans 1:13 (KJV), he says, "I purposed to come unto you . . . that I might have some fruit among you." What Paul is saying is, "I'm anxious to come to Rome to win some people to Christ."

When Paul went to Rome he was not interested in history, he was interested in eternity. When Paul went to Rome, he was not a sightseer. He was a soulwinner. He was a man on the go. He was a man who wanted to win people to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

What made Paul go? I think if we can find out what the motivating factors were which caused Paul to be a witness for the Lord, maybe God can use those same motivating factors to cause us to be a witness for the Lord also. What made Paul go? What makes us go?

In Romans 1:14-16 (KJV), you will notice three times he says, "I am." In verse 14 he says, "I am debtor." In verse 15 he says, "I am ready." In verse 16 he says, "I am not ashamed." There I think you will find the three reasons we go. The three reasons you and I will be motivated to tell other people about the Lord Jesus Christ.

First, I think we will go when we understand our *evangelistic obligation*.

In verse 14, Paul says, "I am debtor." A debtor is one who owes something. A debtor is someone who is bound by an obligation. Paul is talking about a particular kind of debt. He's not talking about financial debt.

I heard about a father who said to his son, "Which *in crowd* are you in? In trouble, in doubt, or in debt?" Most of us are in the latter one, aren't we? We are in debt. However, he is not talking about financial debt, he is talking about spiritual debt which he owes.

There is a background to this statement that we need to understand. When Paul says, "I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians," (Rom. 1:14, KJV), it is a sense of what he owes because of what Jesus has done for him. He understands what Christ has done for him. Jesus died on a cross for him. Jesus forgave Paul of his sins. Jesus brought peace into his life. Jesus made him a new man. Paul was not going to hell now—he was going to heaven. Out of a sense of obligation and gratitude for what the Lord Jesus had done for him, he says, "I am a debtor." He has a debt to the Lord Jesus Christ he is never going to be able to repay, and he spends the rest of his life saying thank you.

Let me ask you a question. Has Jesus ever done anything for you? Can you say Jesus has done something for you? If you are saved, Jesus Christ died on that cross for you. When He shed His blood on Calvary and when those nails were driven into His hands and that spear thrust into His side, He did all that for you. The day you repented of your sins, He forgave your sins. He came into your heart, changed your life, and made a brand new creature out of you. If you and I understand all that Jesus has done for us, we will have a sense of obligation and will tell other people about what Jesus has done for us.

It is a spiritual debt. It is a special debt. It is a global debt. "I am a debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians." It's those who spoke the Greek language and those who didn't. He said, "I'm a debtor to the wise and the unwise." That was Paul's way of saying, "I'm a debtor to everybody."

When you really understand what Christ has done for you and how He has saved you, you can't help but think about the other people who need to hear the same message. We are debtors to all people of all races and all places. We are debtors to the crude and the cultured. We are debtors to the intellectual and to the ignoramus. Everybody needs to hear this good message. Everybody needs to hear that they can be forgiven of their sins. Everybody needs to hear that when they die they can go to heaven and be with God forever. Everybody needs to hear that message.

It is an obligation from which you and I cannot escape. The moment you and I hear and heed the gospel message of the Lord Jesus Christ, at that moment we become debtors to tell other people about the message.

There are two great commandments of the gospel. The first commandment of the gospel is to *come*. Jesus said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28, KJV). When you have answered His command to come, you are now confronted with His command to *go and tell*. Our sense of obligation, our sense of debt causes us to go. It is criminal to have a message like that and not share it with other people.

In 2 Kings 7 is the story about the lepers who were dying and they came to the edge of the city. They said in 2 Kings 7:3 (KJV), "Why sit we here until we die?" You remember the story. The lepers went into town and discovered that the people had fled and there was food and drink and plenty of good things for them. They were just having a big time eating and enjoying it and gorging themselves. Then one of them said to the rest of them, "We do not well. This is a day of good tidings and we keep our peace" (2 Kings 7:9, KJV).

I think about all of the good things we enjoy. I walk into these services and I hear the good music. I sit here and I enjoy the sweet fellowship with my brothers and sisters in Christ. I think I'm going to get back and do it again tonight and worship the Lord and study the Word. I think about all of the good things I have and all of the good things I enjoy. Then I think, "Lord, it's not right for me to just sit here and enjoy it and not go out and tell other people about it."

There is a new protein they have found that may be helpful in healing cancer. Somebody is going to come up with a cure for cancer some day. Won't that be a great day! Seems like everywhere you turn you hear of somebody who has cancer. Think about it! If a man should discover a cure for cancer—what if that man, having found a cure and cured himself, what if that man kept that cure a secret and didn't share it with all of those who are suffering with cancer? It would be criminal. It would be unthinkable for a man to have a cure for cancer and not share it with all people who have cancer.

I have news for you. We have a cure for the sin cancer this morning and it would be a crime for us not to go out and tell people about it. We have an obligation. That's what makes me go. I think it's what makes you go. That's the *mental decision*. You will go when you make the mental decision that you are a debtor, that you have an obligation to tell others about Christ.

In verse 15, there is also the *evangelistic passion*.

Paul says, "As much as in me is, I am ready." There is fire in that word. The word *ready* there is an interesting word. At the heart of the word, *ready* is where we get our words *thermometer* or *thermostat*. It means *heat*. I am ready. I am heated up about something. I am on fire about something. I am passionate about something.

I saw the news report when the Jaguars got their coach, Jack Del Rio. He said, "We are going to bring the passion back." I kind of like that. I don't like to see half-hearted football. How would like to watch a football team with no passion? "We'll throw a pass and if it works, fine. If it doesn't work, fine. We'll try to win the game, but if we don't win, fine." What kind of ball would that be? I want them to be 100 percent. I want the singers to sing 100 percent. I preach 100 percent. I like passion. I like for people to be on fire about what they do.

Here, Paul says, "I'm ready! I'm on fire! I have passion!" Why did Paul have such passion? Look how personal this passion is. Why was he so personal in this passion to tell people about the Lord Jesus Christ? What made him say he was ready to preach the gospel to the people at Rome also? Why is he so passionate about it?

Paul believed certain things. Paul believed that there really is a hell. Paul believed that there is a hell where people go who die without the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior. If you really believe that there is a hell where people go and if they don't know Jesus Christ that's where they go, that creates a little passion, doesn't it?

Somebody says, "I don't know whether there's a hell or not, preacher." Do you believe what Jesus said? Do you believe the words of Jesus? Do you believe Jesus told the truth when He spoke? Listen to the words of Jesus. "The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt 13:41-42, NASB). Jesus spoke words like this. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment" (Matt. 25:46, KJV). Jesus talked about a place where there is fire that is never quenched (see Mark 9:43-45). Jesus had more to say about a place called hell than any other person recorded in the pages of Scripture.

If you believe that there is a hell where people go, and if you believe that people outside the Lord Jesus Christ go to that terrible place called hell, doesn't that touch your heart a little bit? Doesn't that give you a little desire to see people saved? If you really believe that your lost loved ones go to hell when they die, doesn't it move your heart a little? If you really believe that your neighbors and your friends and the people who work around you go to hell if they die without Christ, doesn't that create a little passion in your heart?

I've been preaching the gospel since I was a 16-year-old boy. I believe that Jesus spoke the truth. I believe that people who die without Christ go to hell and it creates a passion in my heart to tell them about Jesus so they might not go to hell and that they might go to heaven when they die. Passion!

I'm personal about it this morning. I want to get you personal about it. You will go when you say, "I am ready!"

Then Paul says, "As much as in me is" (Rom. 1:15, KJV). That's what you call total passion. What he is saying is, "With everything I have, I'm passionate about this matter of winning people to Jesus." I think about what Paul had to offer Jesus. Paul

had a tremendous intellect. Here was a man who was university trained. He had the finest education. Here was a man who along with personality and character had enthusiasm and zeal. Paul gave everything to the Lord Jesus Christ to win souls to Him.

Can you say that you are willing to give everything you have to win souls to the Lord Jesus Christ? Can you say that everything you have you are willing to give that people might be saved. Some of you could teach a Bible class to get people saved. Some of you could give your money to get people saved. Some of you could give an hour of your week in visitation to get somebody saved. Can you say, “As much as in me is”? Too many of us give tidbits of our life to the Lord. Just little pieces and parts of our life to the Lord. You are not totally committed. I think about our congregation. You wonderful people! I love you. What would happen if the whole crowd of you got totally committed to Jesus? Gave your all? Put your whole heart in it? Gave Him your time. Gave Him your talent. Gave Him your treasure. Gave Him your totality, that you might win people to faith. Who knows what we could do for the Lord!

Back in the days of communism, I read about a young communist soldier. He was getting ready to advance his army. They were getting ready to go over the ridge to battle. Someone said to him, “If you go over that next ridge you are going to lose your life. You are walking into a trap. There is no way you can survive if you go over there.” The young communist soldier said, “I would gladly give my life to advance communism one mile.”

I thought about September 11, 2001. I thought about the radicals who manned those planes. Doing it, knowing they were giving their own life. They were willing to give their own life to advance their cause.

Here is Paul. “As much as in me is.” I’m calling on you this morning. As much as is in you to give your passion that people might come to know Christ.

It’s a universal passion. “I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also” (Rom. 1:15, KJV). Think what that meant when Paul said that. Paul had preached the gospel in many places. Paul preached the gospel in Jerusalem, the religious center of the world, and he was mobbed. Paul preached the gospel in Athens, the intellectual center of the world, and he was mocked. Paul preached the gospel in Rome, the legal center of the world, and he was martyred. He had a global, universal passion.

Everybody everywhere deserves to hear about Jesus. I think about missionaries. I think about what causes those people to be missionaries in other countries and to other cultures. Why would they leave the luxuries they enjoy here in our land and go to primitive lands? I’ll tell you why. As much as is in them, they are ready to preach the gospel to the world.

What will cause us to do everything we know to do—to expend every opportunity we have to tell people in this city about Jesus Christ? I’ll tell you what it is. It’s a sense of passion. That’s the *volitional decision*.

I’m ready, I’m a *debtor*. That’s the mental decision. I’m *passionate*. That’s the volitional decision.

Then, number three, I’m not ashamed—the *evangelistic affirmation*.

Notice Romans 1:16 (KJV). This is one of the great verses of the Bible. “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.” He is making an affirmation. In a negative form, he is basically making a positive statement about the gospel. He is really saying that he is proud of the gospel. Paul is saying he is proud of the gospel because of several reasons.

He is proud of the gospel because of its *supremacy*. There is a danger that people would be ashamed of the gospel today. Sometimes there is the danger of *intellectual shame*. I know what the kids in school run in to. I know what happens when you college kids go off to the universities. I know what you encounter many times in your classes and other settings. Sometimes you are made to feel that if you believe the simple gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and if you believe the Bible, you are not just quite with it intellectually. Nobody wants to be thought of as a nincompoop. Everybody wants to feel like they are sharp. There is a danger of intellectual shame.

There is a danger of *social shame*. Everybody wants to be accepted in the group. Nobody wants to be left out. Sometimes if you believe the gospel and are trying to live for the Lord Jesus Christ, you may not be included in some groups.

Then there is the danger of *moral shame* when you don’t go along with the morals of the day. By the way, I just want to say to you that the morals of our day have hit rock bottom. I’m just going to go ahead and say it. I think it is an absolute atrocity that in America now they have started putting pornography in some of the beer advertisements that are on our television. It’s an absolute abomination to God. When they put all of that perversion and all of that pornography and all that filth in our commercials and people sit there and watch it—it’s an abomination. That’s not going to make me very popular. I’m not interested in being popular. I got over being popular a long time ago. I’m going to face Jesus and it won’t be too long. If I live 50 more years that’s not too long. I have to stand before Jesus one of these days. I have a responsibility to tell people the truth. I’m not ashamed of the gospel of Christ that gives people a clean and a pure mind and helps them to have their thoughts in holy and higher realms than this filthy pornography. I’m not worried about being popular.

And Paul is not ashamed. Paul understands the *sufficiency* of the gospel. He understands the *supremacy* of the gospel. Paul understood what was going in his day. He knew the three great intellectual ideas of his day. It was Greek logic, it was Roman law, and it was Hebrew religion. He had put the gospel of Jesus Christ alongside every one of those and said, "I'm not ashamed of the gospel." The message of Christ can hold its own in the intellectual community.

I'll tell you what will make us go. We have a message that can stand the test. You don't have to be ashamed of the message of the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The *supremacy* of the gospel. The *sufficiency* of the gospel. "It is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Rom. 1:16, NASB). That's power! The Greek word is the word *dunamis*. Rome thought they understood power. Theirs was the power of the sword. Theirs was the power of the iron chains. Here was this little, short, weak-eyed Jew heading up to Rome and he had a message about a man dying on a cross. He said, "I'm not ashamed of this message, it's the power of God."

Paul shook Rome. Paul shook the world with the message. That's the power of God unto salvation.

There is power in this message I'm preaching today. It's power to stir the mind. It's power to stab the conscience. It's power to warm the heart. It's power to save the soul. It's power to sanctify the life. It takes drunk people and makes them sober. It takes harlots and makes them pure. It takes thieves and makes them honest. It's the power of God unto salvation. I'm not ashamed of a message like that. It's the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes.

Not only the *supremacy* of the gospel and the *sufficiency* of the gospel, but the *simplicity* of the gospel for everyone who believes. Paul never was ashamed of the gospel of Jesus anywhere he ever was. I can almost imagine how it was. One day they let Paul over the side of a wall in a basket in the city of Damascus (see Acts 9:23-25; 2 Cor. 11:32-33). Can you imagine that? The great Paul, running for his life, being lowered in a basket down the side of a house. Imagine *Good Morning America* interviewing him as he got out of the basket. Imagine them saying, "Paul, isn't this a little bit embarrassing, having to run out of town, having to escape in a basket?" I see Paul as he gets out of that basket and says, "I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. It's the power of God unto salvation."

One time they stoned him in Lystra (see Acts 14:18-20). Imagine Katie Couric interviewing him. "Well, brother Paul, you got stoned. Doesn't that hurt? Don't you wish you hadn't gone to Lystra to preach?" Old Paul wipes off the dirt and says, "It hurts, but I want you to know that I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. It's the power of God unto salvation."

He goes to the city of Philippi and they beat his back to a pulp (see Acts 16:16-34). They throw him into the inner stocks. About that time an earthquake comes and he comes out of there. Imagine that they interview him and say, "Paul, you got whipped and stoned in Philippi. Doesn't that embarrass you a little bit?" He said, "I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. It's the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes."

He went all the way to Rome (see Acts 28). On the go! They put him in the Mamertine Prison where the rats ran on the floor. The filthy insects crawled all over him. The day came when they opened up the Mamertine Prison door and carried Paul across the road to the guillotine and put him down on his knees and got ready to lay his head on the chopping block. Somebody says, "Look at it now, Paul, look what this gospel has done for you now. Don't you want to recant? Don't you wish you had never been a gospel preacher?" I can almost hear him as he says, "I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. It's the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes. To the Jew and also to the Greek."

That's what makes you go. I have a message that I am proud of. It will save people. It will change people. It will give you forgiveness for your sin. It will give you a happy, abundant life. I'm proud of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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